

## **Program Component Update Water Quality**

### **Background**

The objective of the CALFED Water Quality Program element is to provide good water quality for all beneficial uses of the waters of the Sacramento-San Joaquin Bay-Delta estuary. The Water Quality Program Plan, incorporated as an appendix to the Programmatic EIS/EIR, identifies water quality parameters of concern, water quality problems, water quality objectives, and programmatic actions to improve Delta water quality.

### **Program Description**

Advance work for Phase III of the program has begun, with the intention of preparing to take water quality actions early in the implementation phase. In this connection, more detailed definition of water quality actions is being undertaken; detailed actions are being developed; and, priorities for implementation are being established.

The additional program detail is being developed with the assistance of the CALFED agencies working within the Water Quality Technical Group (WQTG). The WQTG is the stakeholder group of about 230 participants that continues providing technical assistance to the program. The work has been distributed among smaller working groups that have been formed to evaluate water quality parameters of concern. Those groups are:

- Drinking water (pathogens, salinity, TOC, bromide, and turbidity)
- Agricultural water (salinity, and selenium)
- Pesticides (chlorpyrifos, diazinon, carbofuran, and other current pesticides)
- Nutrients and sediments (low dissolved oxygen, sedimentation, and organochlorine pesticides)
- Metals (copper, cadmium, and zinc)
- Mercury (mercury from Cache Creek, Sacramento main stem, and delta sediments)

Work group participants are generally experts in the subject areas of the working groups, and represent various agricultural, urban, and ecosystem interests, including CALFED agencies and other interested agencies. The work groups have been meeting actively since their formation on April 15, 1998. By the end of July we expect work group products to be complete, and ready for incorporation into the larger CALFED work product.

### **Issues/Concerns**

Participants in the work groups are tackling issues such as the bioavailability of mercury in the river system as well as the Bay/Delta estuary. The pesticides work group is working on toxicity in urban streams and the estuary. Coordination of water quality work with levee maintenance and ecosystem restoration have been discussed at length in the work groups. Sediment contamination in the delta can adversely effect water quality if precautions are not taken.

When the work group products are complete the information will be used to revise the Water Quality Program Plan appendix to the Programmatic EIS/EIR, as necessary, by the end of August. The additional detail that has been developed will be compiled in an implementation document that will satisfy stakeholder and agency desire for sufficient program detail while maintaining appropriate programmatic content in the EIS/EIR.